

Peter Baines OAM

Leadership Expert and Powerful Storyteller

One of Australia's leadership experts having road tested leadership the hard way. Peter Baines spent 22 years with the NSW Police leading teams in response to acts of terrorism and natural disasters on a scale not previously seen.

Peter was part of the leadership team that responded to Bali after the bombings in 2002 and was called in 2005, to lead international teams in response to the Tsunami of December 26, 2004 in South East Asia. Peter headed up multiple rotations into Thailand leading international teams in the identification process of those who died. All the time his leadership theories were tested in this trying environment.

Creating sustainable leadership became a passion of his after witnessing the devastating effects of the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami. He was deeply touched by the number of children left without parents by the disaster and was inspired to set up an organisation that could make a significant difference in the lives of these children. In late 2005, Hands Across the Water was formed to raise funds for, and awareness of, the children of Thailand who were left alone. Today Hands, has raised over \$30 million Australian dollars. Hands, now has operations in seven different locations within Thailand and provide a home to several hundred children every night.

The work of the charity has always taken a different approach to most in that they focus on creating meaningful shared experiences for their supporters. A cornerstone event of the work of Hands are the long distance bike rides that you will find Peter leading throughout the year in Thailand.

His final years with the NSW Police were spent on secondment to the National Institute of Forensic Science where he worked on national and international capacity building projects around counter terrorism and leadership. He spent time advising Interpol in France and the United Nations Office of Drug and Crime in South East Asia. Peter was engaged by the Government of Saudi Arabia following the deadly floods in Jeddah, to review their response and provide advice concerning crisis mitigation and leadership. In 2011 he deployed to Japan in response to the tsunami that would claim thousands of lives there.

Peter has received various awards including an Order of Australia Medal in 2014, for his International Humanitarian work, and in 2016 he was awarded The Fifth Class of the Most Admirable Order of the Direkgunabhorn awarded by the King of Thailand



In 2010 he was a NSW finalist for the Australian of the Year awards and he was the first Australian to be awarded the international honour of a Rotary Professional Excellence Award in 2008. He received the NSW Police Service Medal and the Australian Federal Police Operations Medal, for his work in Asia. He was the first NSW Police Officer to be awarded the Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal and Australian National Medal. He has completed university studies in Law, Forensic Science and post graduate studies in Management.

Peter has written three books the latest released in 2023, Leadership Matters published by Wiley. Hands Across the Water was his first book and was published by Pan MacMillan in 2011 followed by and Doing Good by Doing Good, published by Wiley in 2014.

When not traveling for work you are likely to find Peter with his wife Claire on their rural property tending to the Hereford cattle they bred. His other pursuits he tackles with a passion is flying helicopters and running ultra marathons. In 2024, to acknowledge the 20th anniversary of the 2004 tsunami he will run 1320km's in just 26 days in Thailand.

Peter Baines talks about:

Leadership Matters

The stories of inspiration, resilience and overcoming adversity. How true leadership doesn't come a position or title by from actions and reactions.

1. Leadership without Authority
2. Clarity of Purpose
3. Building Strong Teams
4. Growth through Adversity
5. Results not Excuses

Experience Matters

Real engagement comes from engineering shared experiences. Peter shares stories of how your business will benefit from the power of presence.

1. Building communities and families through Shared Experiences
2. Engagement strategies that stick
3. Increasing your retention rate
4. Removing self imposed limitations
5. Celebrating your victories

Doing Good By Doing Good

Hear how with an alignment of values and an appreciation that community and business can both profit when working together. Why the future of mutually rewarding relationships is the way to go.

1. Aligning your values
2. Building collaborative programs
3. Developing stronger relationships
4. Measuring your impact
5. Realising a return

The Importance of Balance

Based on one of the most challenging professional careers that you can imagine, dealing with death on a scale not previously seen and leading international counter terrorism projects, the question Peter is most often asked is “How have you done what you have done and seen what you have seen and managed to still be ok?”

You don't walk into a temple where the decomposing bodies of 3500 people lie and walk out months later in a state of sound body and mind without a clear strategy for dealing with what the vast majority of the entire population will never see.

Peter puts his fitness of mind, body and soul down to three things:

1. Having a clear clarity of purpose of why he does what he does;
2. Engaging in a pursuit that is food for his soul; and
3. Growth through the uncomfortable.

During the keynote he draws on the valuable insights from starting what would become Australasia's largest contributing charity to Thailand which now has five entities across three countries. The charity Hands Across the Water enriches the lives of those it engages with and has brought profound change to thousands. It's charity - but not as we know it.

He dissects his latest adventure, scheduled for December 2024, the lead up to running 1400km through Thailand in 26 days. The equivalent of 33 marathons or running from Melbourne to Brisbane and why there is such growth in being uncomfortable.

The key takeouts for the audience from Peter's latest offering are:

- Why action will always beat intention
- The value of creating meaningful shared experiences
- Building resilience through the embrace of the uncomfortable
- Why we can't let yesterday define our tomorrow
- Not waiting until the time is right
- When we embrace the challenge we embrace the learning.

Together We Can

What can on occasions look like monumental individual achievements rarely are they so. Peter demonstrates that it is the power of a cohesive team that allows us to achieve; rather than the power of one. In December 2024, Peter completed his ambitious challenge: running 1400kms over 26 days, the equivalent of 33 marathons across Thailand, battling the heat and humidity.

It wasn't without obstacles, but 1400kms later, the pursuit was realised. A loyal advocate of the Yes Culture, those who know Peter, or know of him, are familiar with his trademark response, 'We will make it work.' Drawing from that spirit, braving the road less travelled, and the community that has brought us to this moment, a new keynote is conceived.

During the keynote, Peter will explore the profound story of Hands Across the Water over the past 20 years, growing from a genuine vision into the largest contributing Australasian charity to Thailand. The charity's work has deeply impacted thousands, enriching lives and fostering lasting change in the communities it serves.

It will highlight the milestones and lives changed along the way, emphasising that these achievements were never the work of one individual. Much like the recent Run To Remember, which may appear as a personal triumph, the reality is that such accomplishments are only possible through the collective efforts of a dedicated community. This message underpins the power of collaboration and shared purpose. Whether it's running to raise awareness or building an organisation that transforms lives, we move forward together.

Through this lens, Peter's story becomes a testament to what's possible when people unite for a mutual endeavour. What emerged from the tragedy of the Boxing Day Tsunami is a legacy of hope, all because one person dreamed, believed, took action, and understood the need for others.

Key Learnings from this new keynote include:

- Action will always beat intention
- Some things we do are meant to be hard – you can have comfort or growth, choose.
- What we are willing to do is more important than what we believe we are capable of.
- Whilst our “why” is so important in the most difficult of times we need to focus on the “how”.
- Winning from a spectacular fail

This new offering from Peter is not just a recap of the 1400km Run to Remember, but an analysis of the key learnings that allowed him to build Hands Across the Water, over the last 20 years, positively impacting the lives of thousands, culminating in the celebration of a journey of sacrifice and struggle.

Client testimonials

“ Peter Baines your speech has left me in awe. Never have I seen anyone deliver the essence of leadership in such a clear, straight forward and insightful way. Your integrity and credibility is established the moment you begin.

- Cadbury Schweppes

“ I remind myself of a moment, free from all the madness that is our present day life, and a man who touched another like no other. A memorable day where the important became real and where an ordinary man became extraordinary, admirable and a hero in a moment. Your

presentation, delivered from the heart as only you can do, was without doubt the most brilliant I have ever had the privilege to experience. There you stood, full of life fuelled by the determination to make a difference.....to give something back. All disasters, man made or natural, are heart wrenching. It's the manner of your actions, the compassion and generosity of spirit, the gentleness and intuitive understanding that moved me beyond words. I now have a great friend for life and I am all the better for it. Thank you Peter, for being such a light for humanity. Yes, I know that you're not God but you are most definitely one of his angels.

- Sony Music

“ Peter Baines recently delivered his 'Leadership Matters' Keynote for our Senior Leaders and extended it into a follow up workshop. As the organiser of the event it was fantastic to look around the room and see the genuine engagement on their faces, and watch as they absorbed his truly compelling messages. The feedback we have received has been excellent, both on Peter's amazing content but also on his thoroughly engaging and captivating presentation style. He truly challenged us to think differently about Value-Based Leadership and what impact and personal contribution our Senior Leaders really want to make.

- St George Bank

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